

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A hinge device for openably and closably connecting one member and ~~the other~~ another member, comprising:

a base member fixed to the one member;

a movable shaft ~~that is~~ rotatably supported by the base member, said movable shaft
5 being fixed [[and]] to [[which]] the [[other]] another member ~~is fixed~~;

a leaf spring member having a curved portion, said leaf spring member being [[and]]
non-rotatably but axially movably inserted onto the movable shaft; and

a fixing plate inserted onto the movable shaft such that the fixing plate is axially movable
and does not rotate when the movable shaft rotates ~~but is axially movable~~, the fixing plate
10 having at least two protrusions located on a surface thereof, said at least two protrusions being
~~provided on its surface~~ in contact with the leaf spring member, ~~characterized in that the~~ wherein
said leaf spring member and the fixing plate are pressed into contact with each other for relative
rotation therebetween.

2. (Currently Amended) A hinge device for openably and closably connecting one member and ~~the other~~ another member, comprising:

a base member fixed to the one member;

a movable shaft ~~that is~~ rotatably supported by the base member, said movable shaft
5 being fixed to ~~and to which~~ the another member ~~is fixed~~;

a leaf spring member having a curved portion, said leaf spring member being [[and]]

inserted onto the movable shaft such that the leaf spring member is axially movable ~~does not rotate when the movable shaft rotates but is axially movable~~; and

10 a fixing plate non-rotatably ~~but axially movably~~ inserted onto the movable shaft such that said fixing plate is axially movably inserted on said movable shaft, the fixing plate having at least two protrusions ~~provided on its~~ located on a surface thereof, said at least two protusions being in contact with the leaf spring member, ~~characterized in that the~~ said fixing plate being pressed into contact with said and the leaf spring member are pressed into contact ~~with each other for relative rotation therebetween~~ such that said leaf spring member rotates
15 relative to said fixing plate.

3. (Currently Amended) A hinge device according to ~~Claim~~ claim 1, ~~characterized in that wherein~~ the base member is a bottomed hollow cylindrical case, and ~~[[that]]~~ the movable shaft ~~onto which the leaf spring member and the fixing plate are inserted~~ is rotatably supported by the case, ~~with the~~ said case receiving said leaf spring member and ~~[[the]]~~ said fixing plate
5 such that said leaf spring member and said fixing plate are located ~~being received~~ within the case.

4. (Currently Amended) A hinge device according to ~~Claim~~ claim 1, ~~characterized in that wherein~~ the base member is a hollow cylindrical case that is open at both ends, and ~~[[that]]~~ the movable shaft ~~onto which the leaf spring member and the fixing plate are inserted~~ is rotatably supported while penetrating extending through the case, ~~with the~~ said case receiving

5 said leaf spring member and [[the]] said fixing plate such that said leaf spring member and said
fixing plate are located ~~being received~~ within the case.

5. (Currently Amended) A hinge device according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~
wherein one of the leaf spring member and the fixing plate is provided with a protrusion and the
other is provided with a recess, hole, or cutout ~~into which~~ for receiving the protrusion ~~[[falls]]~~,
and ~~[[that]]~~ a clicking sensation is produced when the protrusion provided in the one of the leaf
5 spring member and the fixing plate fits in the recess, hole, or cutout provided in the other as the
leaf spring member and the fixing plate relatively rotate while in press contact with each other.

6. (Currently Amended) A hinge device for openably and closably connecting one
member and ~~the other~~ another member, the device comprising:

a bracket fixed to the one member;

a movable shaft ~~that is~~ rotatably supported by the bracket, said movable shaft being
5 fixed to the another member ~~and to which the other member is fixed~~; and

a leaf spring member having a curved portion, said leaf spring member being ~~[[and]]~~
non-rotatably ~~but axially movably~~ inserted onto the movable shaft such that said leaf spring is
inserted onto the movable shaft in an axial direction of the shaft, ~~characterized in that the~~ said
bracket ~~[[has]]~~ having a surface defining at least two protrusions, said at least two protrusions
10 being ~~provided on its surface~~ in contact with the leaf spring member, ~~and that the~~ said leaf
spring member and ~~[[the]]~~ said bracket ~~[[are]]~~ being pressed into contact with each other for

relative rotation therebetween.

7. (Currently Amended) A hinge device according to ~~Claim~~ claim 6, ~~characterized in that wherein~~ one of the leaf spring member and the bracket ~~is provided with~~ has a protrusion and the other ~~is provided with~~ has a recess, hole, or cutout ~~into which for receiving the~~ protrusion ~~provided~~ in of the one of the leaf spring member and the bracket fits in the recess, hole, or cutout ~~provided in~~ the other as the leaf spring member and the bracket relatively rotate while in press contact with each other.

8. (Currently Amended) A hinge device for openably and closably connecting one member and ~~the other~~ another member, the device comprising:

a movable shaft;

a first bracket non-rotatably and fixedly installed on the movable shaft and fixed to the one member;

a second bracket rotatably and axially movably inserted onto the movable shaft, said second bracket being [[and]] fixed to the another member;

a fixing plate secured onto the second bracket, said fixing plate having an opening, said while having the movable shaft being inserted through said opening of the fixing plate; and

a leaf spring member having a curved portion, said leaf spring member being ~~and non-rotatably but axially movably~~ inserted onto the movable shaft such that said leaf spring is

axially movable, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein at least two protrusions are ~~provided on~~ defined
by a contact surface of one of the fixing plate and the leaf spring member, ~~and that the said~~
fixing plate and ~~[[the]]~~ said leaf spring member ~~[[are]]~~ being pressed into contact with each
other ~~for relative rotation therebetween~~ such that said leaf spring member rotates relative to said
fixing plate.

9. (Currently Amended) A hinge device according to ~~Claim claim~~ claim 8, ~~characterized in~~
~~that~~ wherein one of the leaf spring member and the fixing plate ~~that is secured onto the second~~
~~bracket is provided with~~ has a protrusion and the other ~~is provided with~~ has a recess, hole, or
cutout ~~into which~~ for receiving the protrusion ~~[[falls]]~~, and ~~[[that]]~~ a clicking sensation is
produced when the protrusion ~~provided in the~~ of one of the leaf spring member and the fixing
plate fits in the recess, hole, or cutout provided in the other as the leaf spring member and the
fixing plate relatively rotate while in press contact with each other.

10. (Currently Amended) A hinge device according to ~~Claim claim~~ claim 8, ~~characterized in~~
~~that~~ wherein:

the movable shaft has a flange portion ~~provided~~ located at a midway position thereof;
a friction plate is non-rotatably ~~but axially movably~~ inserted onto the movable shaft
such that said friction plate is axially movable, said friction plate being ~~while~~ in contact with the
flange portion of the movable shaft;

a reinforcing plate is secured, while being inserted onto the movable shaft, onto a side

surface of the second bracket which is opposite to a side surface onto which the fixing plate is secured; and

10 the friction plate and the reinforcing plate are pressed into contact with each other for relative rotation therebetween.

11. (Currently Amended) A hinge device according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein a reinforcing leaf spring member is laminated on the leaf spring member.

12. (Currently Amended) A hinge device according to ~~Claim~~ claim 11, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the leaf spring member and the reinforcing leaf spring member laminated on each other differ in spring force.

13. (Currently Amended) A hinge device according to ~~Claim~~ claim 11, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the leaf spring member and the reinforcing leaf spring member laminated on each other differ in deflection amount.

14. (Currently Amended) A hinge device according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the protrusion is in a form of a ball.

15. (New) A hinge device according to claim 1, further comprising:
a nut; and

a washer, said movable shaft having a threaded portion, said threaded portion of said movable shaft receiving said nut such that said nut contacts said washer, said nut and said washer pressing said fixing plate into contact with said leaf spring member.

16. (New) A hinge device according to claim 2, further comprising:

a nut; and

a washer, said movable shaft having a threaded portion, said threaded portion of said movable shaft receiving said nut such that said nut contacts said washer, said nut and said washer pressing said fixing plate into contact with said leaf spring member.

17. (New) A hinge device according to claim 6, further comprising:

a nut; and

a washer, said movable shaft having a threaded portion, said threaded portion of said movable shaft receiving said nut such that said nut contacts said washer, said nut and said washer pressing said fixing plate into contact with said leaf spring member.

18. (New) A hinge device according to claim 8, further comprising:

a nut; and

a washer, said movable shaft having a threaded portion, said threaded portion of said movable shaft receiving said nut such that said nut contacts said washer, said nut and said washer pressing said fixing plate into contact with said leaf spring member.

19. (New) A hinge device according to claim 3, further comprising:

a nut; and

a washer, said movable shaft having a threaded portion, said threaded portion of said movable shaft receiving said nut such that said nut contacts said washer, said nut and said washer pressing said fixing plate into contact with said leaf spring member, said threaded portion, said washer and said nut being located in said case.

20. (New) A hinge device according to claim 4, further comprising:

a nut; and

a washer, said movable shaft having a threaded portion, said threaded portion of said movable shaft receiving said nut such that said nut contacts said washer, said nut and said washer pressing said fixing plate into contact with said leaf spring member.